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DE RUEHNO #0186 0811428
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FM USMISSION USNATO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0657
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 0349
RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY 0117
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0534
RUEHSL/AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA PRIORITY 4415
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY 6244
RUEHBM/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST PRIORITY 2371
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0185
RUEHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY 0464
RUEHDL/AMEMBASSY DUBLIN PRIORITY 0273
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PRIORITY 0857
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0305
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0563
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0383
RUEHLJ/AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA PRIORITY 1095
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0171
RUEHLE/AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG PRIORITY 0774
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 0598
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 0536
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0446
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0272
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE PRIORITY 3939
RUEHRK/AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK PRIORITY 0038
RUEHRA/AMEMBASSY RIGA PRIORITY 7088
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 0511
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE PRIORITY 3282
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY 2339
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 0754
RUEHTL/AMEMBASSY TALLINN PRIORITY 6984
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 0880
RUEHTI/AMEMBASSY TIRANA PRIORITY 4418
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY 0358
RUEHVL/AMEMBASSY VILNIUS PRIORITY 7230
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY 4039
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 0051
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB PRIORITY 5390
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 000186

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/22/2017
TAGS: NATO PREF PTER PREL AF IT
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE RESPONSE: RELEASE OF TALIBAN PRISONERS

REF: A. SECSTATE 36204 B. USNATO 183

Classified By: Ambassador Victoria Nuland, for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. Anticipating reftel A, Ambassador Nuland, during the March 21 North Atlantic Council meeting, joined the UK in criticizing the evident Taliban-for-hostage exchange in the release of kidnapped Italian journalist Mastrogiacomo. She also raised the issue separately with SYG de Hoop Scheffer, who will address it with PermReps in a more restricted forum, but is leaning toward pushing for an Alliance-wide hostage policy. USNATO believes NATO consensus on a common policy will be hard to achieve, but the subject is worth discussing to raise awareness. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) During the March 21 NAC meeting, Ambassador Nuland reinforced criticism by the UK Charge and noted strongly the intrinsic dangers of bargaining with terrorists, plus concern for all Allies if the Taliban thought that hostage taking was a route to future prisoner exchanges (ref B). She and the UK Charge also asked the Secretary General and Chairman of the Military Committee if ISAF had been consulted over the process of Mastrogiacomo's release. Both committed to

investigate. The Italian Charge declined to comment on how the journalist was freed without more details from capital, but expressed the Italian government's gratitude to Karzai for his help.

¶3. (C) SYG de Hoop Scheffer told PermReps during the March 21 NAC that he intends to raise this issue at an informal lunch or coffee gathering of PermReps in the near future. In a separate conversation with Ambassador Nuland, he said he is leaning toward pushing for an Alliance-wide hostage policy.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Raising awareness on this issue among NATO Allies is important and necessary, with the goal of reaching agreed guidelines. However, achieving consensus on a binding NATO hostage policy, similar to NSPD 12, for example, will be very difficult. Few Allies are likely to want a discussion like this which they consider sovereign to be collectively decided. END COMMENT.

NULAND